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The Honourable NOËL A. KINSELLA
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

TRIBUTES

THE HONOURABLE LUCIE PÉPIN

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have received a notice from the Leader of the Government in the Senate who requests that, pursuant to rule 22(10), the time for Senators' Statements be extended today for the purpose of paying tribute to the Honourable Senator Lucie Pépin, who will be retiring from the Senate on September 7, 2011.

[Translation]

I remind honourable senators that, pursuant to the *Rules of the Senate*, each senator will be allowed only three minutes and may speak only once.

[English]

Is it agreed that the period for tributes to the Honourable Senator Lucie Pépin be extended, according to the rules?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: So ordered.

[Translation]

Once Senator Pépin has responded, we will proceed with Senators' Statements.

[English]

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, it is an honour to rise to pay tribute to our colleague Senator Pépin as she prepares to retire from the Senate.

Georges Pompidou, the former Prime Minister and then President of France, once said:

A statesman is a politician who places himself at the service of a nation. A politician is a statesman who places the nation at his service.

Honourable senators, Lucie Pépin has been a great Canadian stateswoman. She was written up in a book called *Women of Influence*, published, interestingly, in 1985, which was the year following Prime Minister Mulroney's landslide majority government election. Madam Pépin ran in that 1984 election as a Liberal in the riding of Outremont. She won. That was not exactly a time when many Liberal MPs would have been written up as "persons of influence."

However, Lucie Pépin has always forged her own path. She trained as a nurse, never expecting to end up in public life. I have read that she grew up expecting to lead a quiet life, raising a family and doing some nursing at the same time. However, in her work during the 1960s at the hospital, she saw women, especially from rural communities, suffering through annual child bearing. There was no information readily available in those days about birth control. In fact, contraception was illegal under the Criminal Code at that time. Meanwhile, many women could not afford the medical fees, so only came to the hospital when complications had set in.

Madam Pépin helped establish the first family planning clinic in Quebec and one of the first in all of Canada. Soon, she became head nurse. She worked to establish a Canada-wide network of hospital-based clinics, and throughout she was lobbying the federal government to change the Criminal Code. On July 1, 1969, they were successful: Parliament decriminalized contraception.

Honourable senators, it is easy to forget just how critical this was for Canadian women. As Senator Pépin said last March:

This freedom of choice, which women won with respect to their bodies, brought about changes in their lives. It was the impetus for becoming more active in society. It changed our socio-economic role.

Madam Pépin continued her work on behalf of women and health issues generally, serving as a representative and adviser to the World Health Organization, the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, and the Population Council. She became first Vice-President and then President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Amongst other things, she was responsible for coordinating the lobbying efforts to formally recognize the rights of women in the Canadian Constitution.

After campaigning actively to encourage more women to run for Parliament, she decided that she should take her own advice. In 1984 she ran for election in the other place and, as I have said, she won. There, she continued to work for the rights of women, children and indeed all Canadians.

When you are an advocate for human rights and social justice, you care about a fair, open and accessible political system. It is not surprising that after her service in the other place, Madam Pépin served on the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing. She then served as a commissioner with the National Parole Board. In 1997, Prime Minister Chrétien summoned her here, to the Senate, to represent a division near and dear to his own heart, that of Shawinigan.

Throughout her almost 14 years here, Senator Pépin has continued to work to advance the causes of social justice, women's rights and the health of all Canadians. The committees she has served on are far too numerous to list, but I must single out her work on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology and especially the Subcommittee

on Population Health, for which she served as deputy chair. That subcommittee recently did an in-depth study of determinants of health that resulted in five reports. The subcommittee found that Canada is falling seriously behind other countries like the United Kingdom and Sweden. It said that it is unacceptable for a wealthy country such as Canada to continue to tolerate such disparities in health. They warned that this disparity may widen — wise words that need to be spoken and need to be heard.

Honourable senators, I cannot end without speaking of Senator Pépin's work on behalf of Canada's military families. All Canadians are aware of the dedication and sacrifice of our soldiers, especially in these dangerous times. However, not everyone pauses to reflect upon the contribution made by their families who quietly support them while living with the ever-present fear for their safety. Senator Pépin has dedicated herself to supporting our military families.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Cowan: Senator Pépin, in so many ways, you epitomize the best of this place. With dignity, grace and strong determination, you have fought for the rights of those whose voices were not always being heard. You have held high a vision of what Canada can and should be, and you have devoted your life to working to making it a reality for all Canadians.

Thank you for your years of service to Canadians and especially for your 14 years of work here. I wish to extend our very best wishes to you and to your family.

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, it is indeed an honour to pay tribute to Senator Lucie Pépin after more than 14 years of service in the Senate of Canada. Today we say goodbye to our colleague Senator Lucie Pépin, who will be with us until September, but, I suppose, the Senate will not be sitting at that time.

• (1410)

During her years in the Senate of Canada, Lucie has greatly benefited this place by her great wisdom, her good nature, her elegance and her grace. She is a shining example to all women across this country of what can be achieved through hard work and perseverance.

Long before she came to this chamber, Senator Pépin devoted her time and energy, both at home and abroad, as a passionate champion for the issues and beliefs close to her heart, many of which concern women and children — matters of equality, child care, family violence, reproductive health and, of course, political participation.

All honourable senators are undoubtedly aware, as Senator Cowan pointed out, of Senator Pépin's career in the other place. Indeed, I well remember the 1984 election, when we were sweeping the country, that this elegant, wonderful woman was elected to represent Outremont in Parliament between 1984 and 1988. We all wondered what special magic she must have had to have withstood the tide.

The following year, after the 1988 election, she was named by the government of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney as a commissioner to the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and

Party Financing. As Government Appointments Director at the time, I was pleased to discuss the possibility of this appointment with then Lucie Pépin, now Senator Pépin. I was pleased that she agreed to serve on the royal commission, and particularly pleased since she was the only female voice, and a very practical one at that, thank goodness. In any event, it was a great commission. We should go back and some read some of the recommendations. They would serve us well today.

Senator Pépin leaves Parliament at a time when the House of Commons has just seen a record number of women elected — 76, a good number and one to build on, but one to which I am sure Lucie would like to see at least another 30 added.

In April 1997, Lucie Pépin was appointed to the Senate by former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. Since that time, she has worked hard on behalf of the people of Shawinigan and her home province of Quebec, but most of all for her country of Canada, in both this chamber and in several Senate committees.

It was my great pleasure to serve for many years with Senator Pépin on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. Her contribution to the committee's work was invaluable, especially her work as a nurse and health care worker, and especially during the committee's honest and comprehensive study of the federal role in our health care system in 2002, and the 2006 report *Out of the Shadows at Last*, which was an important Senate study on mental health, mental illness and addiction. This report ultimately led to the creation under our government of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, which is chaired by our former colleague the Honourable Michael Kirby, who served as the chair of our committee.

Senator Pépin's long background as a health care professional and her genuine concern and compassion for her fellow citizens were a major asset to the committee. I remember that when we were doing the final rewrite of the report, Lucie had many practical suggestions to make that absolutely improved the report.

Honourable senators, as Lucie Pépin takes leave of the Senate in September, I am of the firm opinion that her retirement will find her just as busy as she ever was and that she will continue to have a strong influence in public policy matters of importance in Canada and beyond. On behalf of myself personally and all Conservative senators, I wish Senator Pépin a long, healthy and happy retirement. She will definitely be missed in this place.

[Translation]

Hon. Dennis Dawson: Honourable senators, over 30 years ago, in 1980, when I was parliamentary secretary to Minister Lloyd Axworthy, who was then responsible for the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, I had the pleasure and privilege of working with my friend Lucie Pépin.

She was not only a member of the council, but she was also elected president during that period.

I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of one of her partners in crime from that time, Florence Ievers, who was a member of the executive council and who has since had the opportunity to work with Lucie on many issues.

At the time, Lucie had already made a name for herself in the area of women's issues in Quebec.

Her successful stint with the council easily propelled her to a Liberal Party nomination, and she was elected in 1984. One year that the leader remembers well is the year I lost, but that is not why she remembers it.

Many of you will talk about this period, both in the other place and in this place, and it is true, madam leader, that beginning one's career in politics in opposition is never pleasant. Many of you will talk about this period as a kind of purgatory.

Instead, I would like to focus more on when Lucie was a member of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Like many francophone Quebecers, Lucie and parliamentarians from Quebec must work tirelessly on various fronts: defending federalism in Quebec and promoting the French fact. Being a feminist never stopped her from taking on all of these other challenges. Lucie is a Quebec nationalist, a woman who promotes Canada in Quebec, whether in her current senatorial designation of Shawinigan, her former designation of Outremont or in her beloved Saint-Jean, her favourite place.

On issues such as the law, the environment, foreign affairs or, most important of all for Lucie, the status of women, we must always think of the particular interests of Quebecers and especially of defending the French language.

I would also like to emphasize the fact that the promotion of French and respect for the Official Languages Act were not universal in 1980. Lucie and her colleagues on the council had to fight a major battle at the time: the debate on the Charter of Rights was the debate where, once again, she also had to defend women's rights, but at the same time, never forget that she was also a Quebecer and a francophone. She has had to engage in this ongoing debate ever since she was appointed to the Senate, just as she did prior to her appointment.

Even Minister Axworthy, who was responsible for the council, felt the effects. For those of you who remember —

[English]

— Mr. Axworthy was strongly criticized because he had taken the advice of Lucie, when she was the chair, on insisting that, yes, women's rights are important, but they still have the right to have that right protected in French. It was a priority for Lucie and has remained a priority since then.

[Translation]

However, Ms. Pépin's convictions, her determination and her diplomacy allowed her to succeed and to move the council forward in the right direction.

How many of you have heard Lucie say in this chamber:

[English]

Adjust your earphones. I'm switching to French.

[Senator Dawson]

[Translation]

Lucie always made the point — in caucus, in committee or in this chamber — that she had a responsibility to ensure a francophone presence and to defend the French fact.

This interest in the French language always remained a priority for Lucie, along with her passion for social causes, the plight of military spouses, and the interests of her riding or her senatorial designation.

Lucie always staunchly defended the French language in the other place as well as in the Senate.

Lucie, I hope I am capable of continuing your efforts after you leave.

[English]

Hon. W. David Angus: Honourable senators, one of the nicest, most gracious and thoroughly decent people to come our way will be leaving here shortly. I know her as "Lucia Bella," and of course I am referring to our dear colleague the Honourable Senator Lucie Pépin, who was summoned to the Senate of Canada in April 1997 by the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien.

During her time here, Lucie enhanced this place with her sparkling smile and enlightened approach, not only to public policy and politics but also to life in general. Although a committed and loyal Liberal, true to the principles and discipline instilled in her by her dear friend and political mentor Marc Lalonde, my former partner, she rarely, if ever, openly demonstrated her partisanship in the Senate; and, as far as I know, she has never engaged in the noisy heckling or other boisterous comportment that occasionally gets the best of some of us.

My abiding vision of Lucie during our more heated debates here is that of a bemused observer, ensconced comfortably in her seat with a lovely, serene smile on her face, occasionally putting one hand over her mouth before breaking into peals of genuine hearty laughter. She has a terrific and joyous sense of humour and an engaging ability to always see the lighter and often funny side of an issue. Lucie Pépin is, in my view, one of those special people with a naturally positive and bright outlook. Most of us in this chamber have benefited from it from time to time, Lucie, and we are very fortunate.

• (1420)

She rarely, if ever, complains, even when the going gets tough, as it is wont to do. Lucie demonstrated this in a very big way in recent years when she struggled through several nasty health and physical adversities of her own, while always persevering and keeping a stiff upper lip.

These fine qualities, which I sometimes characterize as the Florence Nightingale syndrome, are likely in part attributable to Senator Pépin's professional training as a registered nurse in Montreal, where she had a distinguished and high-profile career over some 25 years in OB/GYN and family planning at l'Hôpital Notre-Dame and with the Faculty of Medicine at the Université

de Montréal. During this period, Lucie developed the discipline, the sense of duty and a concern for others so evident later on to us here in the Senate. For Lucie, it is, it was and always has been about caring for others, their well-being and their security, as opposed to preoccupations with her own personal issues.

[Translation]

Her career, in both the private and public sectors, has been diverse and distinguished. Throughout her career as a nurse, Lucie was always keenly interested in women's health. This led her to play an active part in the fight for women's rights. She fought for family planning and, throughout her career, she played an important role in the coordination of national actions aimed at obtaining passage of a law to guarantee women's right to contraception and abortion.

In addition, she enthusiastically joined the fight to entrench women's rights in the Canadian Constitution as well as the legislative battle to stop violence against women.

Before arriving in the Senate, during her public career, she had many roles, including MP for Outremont from 1984 to 1988. She was a member of the National Parole Board Appeal Division and a member of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing from 1989 to 1992, in addition to serving on the Lortie commission, to which she was appointed by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney.

[English]

It was during this latter period of the Lortie commission that I had the very great pleasure of working with and getting to know Senator Pépin as the truly dedicated and refreshing individual we all know her to be. I really cannot go into the detail of some of the funny lunches and dinners we had as we discussed electoral finance reform.

[Translation]

Senator Pépin received many distinctions and recognitions for her extraordinary contribution to Canada and Canadians and to Quebec and Quebecers. She was made, among other things, a Chevalier de l'ordre national du Québec.

[English]

All of these honours and awards, Lucie, have been well earned and justly deserved. You have now earned some time for yourself, for your family, some peace and quiet away from the hurly-burly of public life, community service and your great work on human rights and social justice. Therefore, Lucie, we wish you a happy and restful retirement. We will miss you very much.

[Translation]

I hope to see you soon in Montreal or at Lake Memphrémagog.

Hon. Francis Fox: Honourable senators, it is truly a pleasure and an honour to speak today to pay tribute to our colleague, the Honourable Senator Lucie Pépin, for her outstanding contribution to public life in our country and her dedication to the cause of women, families and health.

Those close to her know that her commitment began long before her involvement in politics. For instance, I am told that before Lucie was even old enough to get a driver's licence, she was borrowing the family car to go and help women who had to give birth alone. A nurse by training, she practised at the obstetrics department of Hôpital Notre-Dame, as Senator Angus pointed out. It does not surprise me in the least that she quickly became head nurse.

Her role as vice-president and president of the status of women council would lead her to consider politics as a logical option for advancing the cause of women. She was elected in 1984 and became the critic for the status of women, which would allow her to bring employment equity, among other things, to the forefront.

Among her most significant initiatives, Lucie Pépin advocated for enshrining women's rights in the Canadian Constitution. She formed the first Liberal women's caucus in 1984 and chaired the first caucus of women from all political parties. She became a major champion for the creation of daycare services. She advocated for female members of the RCMP to be part of the RCMP Musical Ride. She also advocated for women to become F-18 pilots. From enshrining women's rights in the Constitution to F-18 pilots, our friend Lucie was interested in all women's causes.

Lucie Pépin has been sitting in the upper chamber for more than 14 years now. She has contributed with devotion to the advancement of a number of issues. She is a great humanist who has quietly devoted her time and energy over the past few years to the families of our soldiers. She has visited military bases across the country to meet the families of our soldiers in order to help the Canadian Forces develop policies to meet the needs of military spouses and children.

I have known Lucie for many years. I will miss having her in the Senate. She has always felt the need to see social justice flourish in the world, and she has had the courage and strength of her convictions. She is certainly a model for generations to come who also dream of changing the world.

Since the end of one stage is always the beginning of another, I would like to wish her good luck and much success in her future endeavours.

Hon. Carolyn Stewart Olsen: Honourable senators, I am speaking today to pay tribute to Senator Lucie Pépin.

[English]

Being new to this chamber when I first came, I was impressed by the lady who sat just across from me who always seemed so calm and so self-assured, a manner I am still trying to emulate. Finding out she had a nursing background gave me somewhat of a kinship with her.

[Translation]

I would like to say that, having done some research on her impressive life for this tribute, I am filled with admiration for all of her accomplishments.

[English]

My honourable colleague has distinguished herself in both the private and public sectors. I think most impressively in the 1960s when she worked and helped to establish one of the first outpatient birth control clinics in Canada at a time when freedom of choice for women was not yet a reality.

[Translation]

Senator Pépin was at the forefront of the women's rights movement in Quebec. What a warrior!

[English]

What a warrior. It cannot have been easy to move public opinions and match words with action. Many of us can do one, rarely both. What tenacity.

Over the years, Senator Pépin has worked tirelessly for women's rights at both national and provincial levels, and was deeply involved in ensuring the entrenchment of women's rights in our Constitution.

[Translation]

Her work has been recognized on the international stage. My honourable colleague was a member of a World Health Organization task force. She travelled to Vietnam in 1996 to help prepare women for a life in politics.

[English]

Elected as the Member of Parliament for Outremont in 1984 and appointed to the Senate in 1997, she has spent a lifetime serving the Canadian public.

Honourable senators, I have not once asked for her support for various projects and not received her warm support. I am delighted today to pay tribute to this gracious woman who has won her place in Canadian history and in the hearts of those she represented.

[Translation]

Senator Pépin, I wish you all the best as you leave this chamber.

Hon. Serge Joyal: Honourable senators, the retirement of Senator Lucie Pépin gives us the opportunity to highlight how beneficial it is to the Senate when a senator is appointed with care and with full respect for the institution's role within our parliamentary system.

• (1430)

When Senator Pépin was appointed to the Senate in 1997 — the same year Senator Sharon Carstairs became the first woman appointed as Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and

Senator Thelma Chalifoux, a Metis, became the first Aboriginal woman senator — there were 24 women senators. Today, there are 38.

But the number of women in the Senate has remained virtually unchanged since 2006. There is a tendency for that number to go down and back up again, and Senator Pépin will not be happy about this, because her first battle as head of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women was aimed at having women participate fully in Canadian politics.

Senator Pépin's greatest contribution to improving the status of women in this country is the recognition of women's right to choose and have control over their own destiny, just like men.

When the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was being debated in 1980, Senator Pépin was one of the primary spokespeople for the movement calling for the inclusion of section 28 of the charter, which recognizes full equality between men and women. I quote:

Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

As a senator, Ms. Pépin helped change the face of the Senate and make it better able to address the social and human concerns of Canadians. Her background as a nurse made her the perfect person to speak up for those who were unable to do so, to remind us of the importance, if not the urgency, of their needs, as well as for the unsung heroes.

Senator Pépin looked out for military spouses, who are too often forgotten in debates on defence, which are primarily focused on arms, declarations of war and military power. Behind those on the front lines are those who remain at home alone to take care of the children, as they worry about whether their loved one will return at all or will return wounded in body or spirit.

Being very generous with her time, she often spends her weekends supporting the activities of military spouses through various resource centres. This is to her credit and to that of the Senate, where she has faithfully served these past 14 years.

With great concern for the fate of women and youth suffering from mental illness, Senator Pépin became the voice of those who, because of inadequate services, are left to fend for themselves in the street, people who are often abused and are losing their dignity.

This aspect of human need is what has always motivated Senator Pépin's commitment, in her work both inside and outside the Senate, to her social priorities.

[English]

Soft-spoken, but convincing, direct but always elegant, Senator Pépin is the kind of person whose arguments no one can ever refuse to listen to and respond.

[Translation]

Always sensitive to the plight of all minorities, she contributed to our debates here in the Senate at many critical moments. For instance, seven years ago, she made an invaluable contribution to recognizing minority rights with the passage of Bill C-250 to amend the provisions of the Criminal Code regarding hate propaganda.

In this way, Senator Pépin demonstrated that senators have a duty not just to reflect the partisan positions of their political party, but also to make a personal investment in order to lend a voice to those whom the majority tends to marginalize.

Always attentive to the work of the Senate, even when temporary health problems could have or should have kept her away from the debate, Senator Pépin was too honest and too generous to do anything but perform her duties as a parliamentarian fully and completely.

We can only hope, dear Senator Pépin, that you will find many other opportunities to contribute to our country, which can only benefit from your humanity, your generosity and the warmth of your deep convictions.

Hon. Pierre Claude Nolin: Honourable senators, the Honourable Lucie Pépin has made her mark in more ways than one. Her public life has been punctuated by many milestones that are of importance to all Canadians, but particularly to women.

For one, there was her successful tenure as vice-president and president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women from 1979 to 1984. Consider also her impressive involvement in the work of the Badgley Committee on the Application of the Abortion Law from 1975 to 1977 and then, from 1980 to 1983, her work as a member of the Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children. Finally, consider her unquestionable influence on the preparatory work for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Just as effectively, but more discreetly, Lucie Pépin has been involved in the lives of the wives and children of Canadian military personnel. Now the wife of every member of the Canadian Forces knows her name.

In every issue that affects them — pay, housing, schools, environmental health, and living conditions in general — she has worked tirelessly to defend those who, in the shadows, encourage and boost the morale of our soldiers, sailors and airmen in the forces and the reserves.

Her achievements in defence and security are numerous. Many people do not know that she was the first female Canadian parliamentarian to participate in the North Atlantic Assembly, now known as the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

A trained nurse specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, Senator Pépin is also a model of selflessness. Who does not have memories of one of these unobtrusive yet efficient women who have maintained the health of our people through the ages?

Lucie is certainly cut from the same cloth as Jeanne Mance, which may explain the fact that she represented Canada and worked with the World Health Organization, the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations as well as the Population Council.

Senator Pépin, you deserve our respect, and we thank you. I am not sure whether this new stage of your life will truly be a retirement, but that is up to you.

In closing, I would like to share a memory with the new senators, who will not be surprised, and with the not-so-new senators, who will recall with much fondness the evenings Senator Pépin organized with Senator Lynch-Staunton to bring senators from Quebec together in an environment that was completely non-partisan, but definitely very festive. My dear Lucie, Mme la Chevalier, thank you very much. I wish you continued success and Godspeed.

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, it is with some emotion and great pleasure that I speak today to pay tribute to our dear colleague, Senator Lucie Pépin. She is a remarkable, caring woman and a very kind colleague who deserves our respect and our profound gratitude. She is a great parliamentarian with a unique career whose passion, devotion and pioneering actions not only advanced women's rights, but are a source of inspiration for many Canadian women to enter politics. She is a woman of great class and elegance who made herself heard in order to advance her ideals. She is a model of perseverance for the women of our generation.

Since her appointment to the Senate by the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien on April 8, 1997, Senator Pépin has faithfully carried out her duties by drawing on her experience, knowledge, generosity, goodness and devotion. Her sincere commitment and her determination to change things for women and children, military wives and veterans have been recognized across Canada. Senator Pépin has stood up for social justice causes throughout her years in Parliament. She has clearly demonstrated her humanism and her convictions by coming to the defence of military wives, among others.

• (1440)

Very early on in her life, she tackled serious problems head-on, at a time when very few women were addressing such controversial issues. She was a great pioneer whose actions and tenacity advanced the cause of women.

Dear Lucie, you are a person who seeks consensus, a unifying force who likes to go out with colleagues and friends for a good dinner, an enjoyable evening, a good party.

You are always happy, smiling, full of life, and I can say that I have very much appreciated your company and your friendship.

Dear colleague, your actions throughout your parliamentary career have contributed to the evolution of our institution. You remain a source of inspiration for all of us. Your contribution to active political life and to our democratic institutions is invaluable to future generations.

Dear Lucie, please accept my best wishes for health and happiness in the coming years.

Hon. Jean-Claude Rivest: Honourable senators, I would like to join you in paying tribute to our friend Lucie.

At a time when politics is often unfairly disparaged by the public, I believe that the career of someone like Lucie Pépin shows very clearly the value of political engagement such as that of Lucie, who, at every step in her career, focused only on public service.

I believe that Senator Pépin's actions reflect well on politicians in general, and I believe that each and every one of us must congratulate her for this invaluable contribution to the entire population.

I certainly wish to mention and highlight the incredible, ongoing, dedicated and effective efforts by Senator Pépin to promote women's rights in the areas of health and social services. I would also like to just say, on a personal note, as others have mentioned, that although she was a Liberal — and God knows that she always has been and always will be a Liberal — she demonstrated a great openness, since even the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney called on her services.

I am sure it will make her smile, but I have to mention that Senator Pépin — even though few people know this, I am not telling a secret — had been chosen by the then Premier of Quebec, the sovereignist Premier Lucien Bouchard, for the position of lieutenant-governor. It was early in her career here in the Senate. Something happened that Lucie could share with you, a very good thing too because since it was early in her career in the Senate, she stayed, which allowed her to make the contribution we have come to know to our institution.

She is a caring, intellectual, open-minded woman who is completely devoted to the interests of Quebec. She is a Quebecer through and through who has remained faithful and loyal to Quebec, but also open to and passionate about her country, Canada.

Happy retirement, Lucie, and farewell.

[English]

Hon. Ethel Cochrane: Honourable senators, I also rise in tribute to an outstanding colleague. As others have already stated, Senator Lucie Pépin's contribution to this place, and especially to the health and well-being of all Canadians, is indisputable. She has been an unparalleled advocate for women, children and families throughout her entire professional life.

As a colleague, she is respectful, conscientious and easy to work with. I had the pleasure of serving on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology with Lucie a few years ago, and I was struck by her positive attitude and her thoughtfulness. Indeed, I observed that she always met the comments and concerns of those around her, witnesses and colleagues alike, with kindness and warmth, thoughtful attention and an open mind.

[Senator Tardif]

Honourable senators, what impressed me the most about Lucie was how much love and respect she has for her family, and how she so freely articulates it. This was particularly clear when she spoke about the remarkable bond she shared with her mother.

Lucie, your strength as well as your unwavering principles and values will be sorely missed. I wish you every happiness and success in all of your future endeavours, but above all I wish you great health and much joy in the years ahead.

[Translation]

Hon. Paul J. Massicotte: Honourable senators, I would like to take a moment to talk about my friend, Senator Pépin. Unfortunately for us, she will be retiring on September 7.

It is difficult to limit a tribute to someone like this to a few words. Her contributions and accomplishments are many. As some honourable senators have pointed out, Senator Pépin has been involved in Canadian politics in many ways, most notably as a member of Parliament, then as a senator for the senatorial designation of Shawinigan. She has always represented the interests of Quebecers and Canadians with passion and conviction.

Her experience in the health field and her interest in human rights made her a pioneer for the cause of women, particularly with respect to contraception.

She is also known for her commitment to military wives. Because of her close contact with families, she became an advocate for and a sort of godmother to military wives. She would often act as an intermediary between the government and military families, and she was able to raise the profile of those who stay behind and quietly make great sacrifices.

Her human kindness and unconditional generosity toward this cause show that a politician is able to move issues forward without partisanship and without seeking political credit.

Senator Pépin has always been a reliable, honest and open person. She is an extraordinary human being and she has been a model parliamentarian for all of us. We were privileged to have worked with this great woman, who, with her many accomplishments, provided an invaluable service to the people of Canada.

Senator Pépin, you can leave with your head held high, because your work both inside and outside this chamber has been outstanding. I tip my hat to you and wish you a retirement filled with much happiness. The time has come for you to dedicate more time to your family, to your grandchildren whom you love so much, about whom you have spoken so much, and who are here with us today. You have the respect of your peers on Parliament Hill and across Canada. We will all miss you. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement, my dear friend.

[English]

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Honourable senators, I too rise today to join in paying tribute to our colleague Senator Lucie Pépin. So much has been said, but it bears repeating.

Senator Pépin has led an outstanding life of public service and for decades has made an extraordinary personal commitment to helping others. She started as a nurse and went on to be a teacher and an educator in the world of TV. She organized conventions, led medical research at an international level and then, of course, ran and won a seat in the other place. In 1997, she was appointed here, where she has served on many committees doing so much work.

In the short time that I have been here, I have seen her at our National Security and Defence Committee and with the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, where she has worked tirelessly on behalf of the families of our military forces and veterans.

It is said that the truest test of our character is what we do when we think no one is looking.

• (1450)

Senator Pépin does her work quietly, without fanfare, without any need for personal attention. More than many of us, she has thrown herself heart and soul into her work, doing the hard slogging in person, not just delegating the chores to others. I admire this greatly.

Senator Pépin is real. She is from the heart. I feel a special bond with her through our personal struggles with illness.

I wish her all the best, and I know she will always continue to be a person who gives of herself, gives generously of her time and her heart.

It was a pleasure working with you.

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-P. Poulin: Honourable senators, long before being appointed to this place in 1997, Lucie Pépin had forged out a name for herself as a crusader for social justice and human rights. Her dedication to advancing women's health set a high benchmark for all of us, as did her advocacy on behalf of women's equality.

Lucie Pépin is a woman of many colours — a nurse who helped pioneer new ground in family planning, gynecology and obstetrics. She was in the forefront of establishing Quebec's first out-patient birth planning clinic back in 1966 and she subsequently was instrumental in the creation of a network of hospital-based clinics.

At a time when it was risky to talk publicly of sexual matters, Senator Pépin was in the vanguard of efforts to inform young people about issues of sexuality, maternity, contraception and abortion.

Her strong sense of social justice led to her appointment to many key positions, both in Canada and abroad, whether it involved serving on a committee to examine inmates' parole or,

more recently, one to address family violence in the Canadian Armed Forces. As we all know, when Senator Pépin accepts a responsibility, she will not be satisfied with half measures. She has visited almost all the military bases in Canada.

Indeed, her reputation as an advocate for social justice and women's health and rights has not been limited to this country: Lucie Pépin commands an international stature.

Without a doubt, she is truly a remarkable Canadian, a multi-dimensional woman with a wealth of experience and skills. She has been a valuable asset for our institution and for Canada.

Hon. Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis: I am very pleased to rise in the Senate today to pay tribute to an amazing woman whom I admire so much, a long-time colleague, the Honourable Lucie Pépin.

We first met in the 1980s when we were both members in the other place. Still today, as in the past, our discussions have always transcended any partisanship and have always been characterized by respect. I must admit, I have always really appreciated this, and our open camaraderie has often served as a counterbalance to the somewhat heavy atmosphere that sometimes reigns when we are confronted with conflicting political allegiances.

My dear colleague, throughout your career, you have been a proud torchbearer for the status of women, health, promotion of social justice and human rights. Your impressive involvement in our society has had a significant impact on the lives of many Canadians.

The numerous honours and distinctions you have been awarded are a testament to a wonderful Canadian whose achievements will benefit the entire country for years to come.

You should be proud of what you have accomplished, and I am certain that this already successful career will not end here in the Senate. Recently, Lucie, you told me that you will miss the Senate and the work we do very much. I know that you still have much to offer and that there are already some great challenges awaiting you. I want to warn you that you will have no time left to think about yourself.

Honourable colleague, I pay tribute to you and wish you health, happiness and a long life, from the bottom of my heart.

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, I would like to add my tribute to those made by my colleagues. The issues that are dear to us, such as women's rights and health, immigration and refugees, the rights of children and daycare, at some point joined us in a common mission. Entire generations have paid, are paying and will pay tribute to you, and will equate your name with the word "help." Help for the smallest, help for mothers, help for adolescents — especially adolescents — and help for women.

You are one of the founding members of Passage House, a house where young prostitutes find protection and assistance. With your invaluable help, the children in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood have quality daycare while their mothers, immigrant or refugee women, take language courses.

On my last trip to Uganda, my native country, I had the honour of being welcomed by the head of a maternity hospital. This female doctor welcomed me because she knew Senator Pépin very well. Your reputation, senator, has reached far beyond North America.

We join our voices today to thank you for sharing with us your passion, warmth and sincere friendship. I hope that the beautiful days of your retirement will brighten the years to come and that you will come visit us from time to time. You will be missed, Senator Lucie.

[English]

Hon. Linda Frum: Honourable senators, it is with sadness that I join the other tributes today to say adieu to our friend and colleague Senator Lucie Pépin.

This past weekend I was in Kingston leading a walk in commemoration of John A. Macdonald and I was asked by one of the participants on the walk if I would comment on the level of partisanship that exists in the Senate today.

Of course, as we all know, there are many ways to answer such a question, but in the spirit of John A. I decided to answer the question by talking about my friend, the elegant and wise Senator Pépin.

As I explained to the group in Kingston, one of my very earliest experiences in the Senate happened two years ago, after I had made a Senator's Statement about a fundraiser I had helped to organize for the Military Families Fund of Canada. As I soon learned, support for military families is a cause that has long been important to Senator Pépin.

Immediately after I made my remarks, Senator Pépin approached me with warm enthusiasm. Although we did not really know each other, she told me how pleased she was to find a new senator with whom she could share this area of interest. To her, our differing party affiliations were of no consequence. Knowing that she was soon to retire, Senator Pépin's only concern was for the families who have come to rely on her as their special champion in the Senate.

To military families across English and French Canada, Senator Pépin has become a hero in her own right. For the past 12 years she has made it her mission to regularly visit Canada's military bases, offering moral support to the families of the men and women who serve our country, and letting them know, on behalf of the Senate of Canada, that their emotional and physical sacrifices are appreciated, understood and respected.

• (1500)

After establishing this common interest between us, Senator Pépin then invited me to join her on her next scheduled visit, which happened to be to the Canadian Air Force Base in Cold Lake, Alberta — in February, no less. As moved as I was by the generosity of spirit behind her invitation, I was even more affected by the sincere and deep affection that I saw on display that weekend between Senator Pépin and the military wives on whom she had come to call. Their mutual respect was greatly evident.

[Senator Jaffer]

Although I can never aspire to possess the level of charm, warmth, wit or energy of Senator Pépin, who cheerfully visited the base from early morning until late at night — and who also insisted not only on doing all of the driving there and back but also on making a spontaneous visit to a local women's shelter to ensure that everything there was also in order — I will always try to emulate her compassion and commitment to service.

The love and goodwill Senator Pépin has earned in the military family community across Canada belongs uniquely to her. However, I do promise you, Lucie, that I will do my best to advocate for the interests of military families as long as I am here.

[Translation]

Senator Pépin, you have had a most prominent and distinguished political career. Your work for military families is just one of your many great achievements. As you prepare to retire from the Senate, I hope that you are happy to know that men and women on both sides of this chamber have a great deal of respect and admiration for you.

We will miss you, Senator Pépin.

[English]

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: Honourable senators, I should like to join with others in paying tribute to our colleague Senator Lucie Pépin. For more than 14 years, she has made a tremendous contribution to the work in this chamber and in its committees. Through her hard work and dedication, she has been a great source of inspiration to all who have had the opportunity to serve with her.

I had the privilege to serve on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, where she was a member for many years. She certainly showed great attention to detail, a broad knowledge of the subject and made a tremendous contribution to that committee.

As has been said, the senator's work did not simply begin when she came to the Senate. Other speakers have listed the many organizations and causes to which she has lent her talents and accomplished so much over the years. Let me just say that over the span of her entire career, she has shown a tremendous commitment and dedication to the people of Canada and to the world. She will be greatly missed in the Senate, but I am sure that she will continue to work on those issues that mean so much to her.

It has been both a pleasure and a distinct privilege to serve with her. Senator, I wish you good health and lots of happiness.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: Honourable senators, I would like to add my contribution to this sea of well-deserved praise. It is a privilege for me to speak in this chamber to pay tribute to a friend and distinguished colleague, although we have not been sitting together long in this upper chamber.

I want to wish her well in her retirement and whatever comes next. We all know how much energy she has, so I do not think she will stay retired for long.

[English]

The person who will leave this chamber is not only a woman of action with whom we all appreciate working but also one who brought to this Parliament a thoughtful glance and a constructive dialogue on important stakes. I personally attach great importance to some of them.

[Translation]

This is especially true of mental health and drug addiction. For example, Senator Pépin contributed to the report entitled *Out of the Shadows at Last*. This report was the culmination of three years of extensive study by the senator and her colleagues to help Canadians dealing with mental health issues.

I am sad to be losing a colleague and friend like Senator Pépin. I believe that together, in this mission to improve public safety for Canadians, we could have improved the lives of those dealing with mental illness.

In Canada, nearly 20 per cent of prisoners have some kind of mental illness, and imprisonment is certainly not the answer for them. Better social and medical support is the only way to treat this terrible problem. Politicians at all levels must get involved and start working together.

We have nothing but gratitude for the many years that Senator Pépin has spent serving Canada as a health care professional, a member of Parliament and a senator. Her legacy will be her concern for the quality of life of everyone around her.

[English]

I wish you all the success that you deserve in your future initiatives. I shall always be honoured and available to work with you so that all Canadians may live better and live better together.

[Translation]

Honourable colleague, honourable senator, honourable lady, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart and I wish you health, prosperity and a very happy life outside the Senate.

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Honourable senators, I would like to talk about my connection with Senator Pépin, not in the context of her political life, but in the context of my family and the families of those with whom I worked for 36 years.

On Saturday, I visited my mother, who lives in a long-term care centre in Longueuil. She is 92 and has been a Liberal since 1957. Her MP at the time was Prosper Boulanger. When I told her you were leaving the Senate, she recalled the days when you and Senator Lise Bacon worked within the party for the cause of women. She is very grateful and she remembers.

Although she has been a Liberal her entire life, her long-term care centre is named after René Lévesque. She sometimes has a bit of a problem with that. Elizabeth also sends along her greetings. This evening, the board of directors at the Valcartier Family

Centre will move a special motion in your honour. The purpose of the motion will be to thank you and to tell you what it means to have such a wonderful woman in such a significant place for the country take an interest in military families.

Let us not forget that these families are not only forgotten, but sometimes they are not understood. This still goes on in this male-dominated organization and we know it happens often. Woe betide the base commander who has not implemented the recommendations you made during your previous visit when you told him there were still some shortcomings.

Many senior officers and general officers, including the Chief of Defence, as well as the chair and deputy chair, have said you have had a positive and important influence.

• (1510)

We depend on your objectivity and not on your political bias. We also depend on your humane impartiality when it comes to these families.

I would like to point out something that has not yet been mentioned concerning one of your initiatives, dear Senator Pépin. The fact is, we now have a significant number of women veterans within the Canadian Forces. Some of those women have been injured in overseas missions, in F-18s or on the ground, with their boots in the dust and the heat.

Not only have some women veterans been injured, but there are some whose families have paid the ultimate price, such as the Goddards, whose daughter was killed in the line of duty in Afghanistan.

These women regard you as their godmother. They even see you as a Mother-Teresa-type figure, considering the lengths you go to to try to ease their concerns.

I salute you. I salute you as a former Canadian Forces member and I salute you on behalf of my family, which has benefitted from the fruits of your labour.

I also salute you for having had the courage to be a member of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, when we all know that that committee does not appeal to many of the women of this institution.

You are the “grande dame” of the Senate. You are the “grande dame” of Saint-Jean. You were the “grande dame” of the officer cadets at the Military College, especially the young female officer cadets who will begin their careers knowing that such a “grande dame” brought their concerns to the attention of the highest levels of authority.

I salute you and will always think of you fondly, my dear friend.

[English]

Hon. Nancy Ruth: Lucie, this is absolutely amazing. To hear tributes from so many people, from so many sides, brings me to tears. There are hundreds and thousands of Canadians everywhere who owe you so much.

My story of meeting Lucie Pépin dates back 30 years ago. Lloyd Axworthy was Minister responsible for the Status of Women. He had said to many women in the country that they could not have their say on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Constitution, and there was quite an uproar about this: Lucie became President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and let us have our say. It was in that context, when we were influencing the language in sections 15 and 28 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that I met Lucie Pépin.

I knew then that under her chic, warm, polite exterior resided what I call "Lucie the warrior." The outside may be silk, but the inside is steel.

Honourable senators, "Lucie the warrior" leaves us a great legacy. I had a look at her speeches and statements she has given in the Senate, and here are some of the things she has said to us over the 14 years she has been here:

Think big and set clear, public goals.

... the women and men of this country must work shoulder to shoulder as we strive to change attitude and actions. Eliminating violence against women will require the efforts of all sectors of society.

Be untiring in the interests of women and children. Like the women who came before, do not be afraid in the face of strong opposition. Women are nation builders.

Use your courage, tenacity, leadership and talent. Without women, Canada would not be the dynamic, prosperous, and exemplary democracy that it is today.

Never cede the high ground.

Can we let an increasing number of people live in poverty and suffer?

Change leads to change: start with what you know.

Reproductive choice opened doors for women in a radical way ... women gained control over their lives. This freedom led to other freedoms and options that have altered women's place in our society — self-esteem, education, jobs, a voice and empowerment.

Keep the doors open. Make one change, and it leads to another, and build on change to reach the goal.

With the Muskoka Initiative on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, I want to encourage the government to keep listening to the specialists who know that reducing maternal mortality means ... high-quality obstetrical care, access to care during delivery, and access to contraception and family planning resources.

Never rest on your laurels.

We must never forget that the fight for rights can be lost very quickly.

Lucie, do not rest on your laurels either. Send us the news of the leadership of Quebec women and men. We commit to staying vigilant. We celebrate the steel in the silken you. Thank you, "warrior woman." I will miss you.

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, I too would like to say a few words in honour of our colleague Senator Lucie Pépin.

As others have stated, Senator Pépin has spent a lifetime advocating for women's health and equality issues on both the provincial and federal levels. Beginning early in her career, Senator Pépin fought for women's reproduction and fertility rights. She has since been integral in ensuring legislation protecting women's rights to contraception and to having access to family planning clinics.

Senator Pépin was able to bring her passion for social issues to federal politics as the Member of Parliament for Outremont from 1984 to 1988. During her time in the House of Commons, she acted as opposition critic for the Status of Women. I remember being in awe of Senator Lucie Pépin when she came to Nova Scotia to speak to the Nova Scotia Women's Liberal Commission. Little did I know that I would be privileged enough to work with her over the years in the Senate of Canada. Senator Pépin was able to continue her efforts on Parliament Hill when she was appointed to the Senate in 1997.

I had the pleasure of serving with Senator Pépin on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. During that time the committee undertook two major studies focused on Canada's health care system and Canada's mental health, mental illness and addiction policies. Both studies have highlighted many areas where Canada has to take steps to improve the care of Canada's most vulnerable.

Lucie, I must also applaud your efforts of support for the families of our military personnel. As many of our Canadian Armed Forces personnel are increasingly stationed around the world, their families are left behind. It is not an easy task for these partners of military personnel, who are often raising young children and moving around frequently. It is important for us to provide all the support we can for our military families. Your message of supporting our troops by supporting the military families is an important one.

Senator Pépin, on behalf of all Canadian women and the families of our troops, I want to express gratitude to you for all your efforts and many accomplishments over what has been an amazing career. So many owe you a huge debt of gratitude.

Lucie, my best wishes to you and to your family on your retirement.

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I would like to recognize the exceptional contribution of Senator Pépin, not just to this chamber, but also

to Canadian society and, more particularly, the undoubted role she has played in the advancement of women's rights, the health of children and adolescents, the integration of immigrants, and social justice in general.

Senator Pépin is a caring, compassionate, attentive and committed woman who, throughout her career, used her exceptional qualities to benefit her community.

• (1520)

Her generosity and determination made it possible for her to establish organizations and associations to support the most disadvantaged in our society. Like the stone that creates ripples when thrown into the water, the outreach that Lucie Pépin has been involved in since the 1960s is still producing ripples to this day to the benefit of an impressive number of people.

Senator Pépin was able to demonstrate her exceptional human qualities in this Senate chamber, and everyone agrees that Lucie Pépin is an amazing woman. Her gentleness, sweetness, sensitivity, great empathy and rigour make her an esteemed colleague.

I would especially like to point out her active participation in the work of the Senate as a member of the Special Joint Committee on Child Custody and Access and the joint chair of the Special Joint Committee to amend Section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867, concerning the Quebec School System in 1997.

Senator Pépin, in some ways, your retirement from the Senate is a blessing for your community because, with your boundless energy, I know that you will not stop and will continue to give with all your heart to your cherished citizens.

Senator Pépin, it has been a privilege knowing you and working with you. I would like to thank you for the legacy you are leaving us here in the Senate. Enjoy your retirement, but do not forget to come back and visit us often.

Hon. Rose-Marie Losier-Cool: Honourable senators, I, too, would like to pay tribute to Senator Pépin with some personal and humorous remarks.

I remember well the first time I met Senator Pépin, long before we were in the Senate. It was in my province, my corner of the country, in Tracadie-Sheila, when I was involved in Dames d'Acadie and Senator Pépin was president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Lucie Pépin came as a guest speaker. Afterwards, Senator Pépin was not pleased with the television offerings at Tracadie-Sheila's only motel. She asked for her money back and came to my family's home to sleep — this was back when *Bleu Nuit* was on.

My colleague's career has certainly been very impressive, and since others have summarized it so well, I will not do the same. However, I would like to speak about three issues that both Senator Pépin and I are passionate about and work to promote. The first is women's health and family planning, in particular. In

fact, Senator Pépin had come to talk to Acadian women about family planning. A thousand thank yous, Lucie Pépin, for your work on these issues. Thanks to you, women today live better and are freer.

The second issue is women's rights. You were president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Senator Pépin, and you know how much progress women have made in 50 years. You also know how much further there is to go. I hope that you will keep up your efforts in this area. You can count on me to help you.

Finally, I tip my hat to your open-mindedness towards developing countries, Senator Pépin. Your efforts in the health sector have undoubtedly helped save lives and improve conditions for people who are less privileged than we are. I applaud your efforts to promote democracy for women in some of these countries — your time in Vietnam has already been mentioned. I am president of the Réseau des femmes parlementaires de la Francophonie, and we have taken up this torch. I regret that we were not members at the same time and able to work together. You would have been a wonderful asset.

Dear Lucie, you are a remarkable woman and a great human being, and I sincerely thank you, on behalf of my fellow sisters, parliamentarians or not, for everything you have done and for what I am sure you will continue to do in the coming years.

I will always be happy to see you again. Enjoy your retirement and enjoy your time with the children.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I am pleased to join my colleagues in paying tribute to Senator Lucie Pépin.

Since my first day in this chamber, I have always admired her grace, her intelligence and her steely determination when working on issues that are important to her.

Although Senator Pépin has taken on a number of causes during her time here, as you all know, it is her concern for the well-being of military families that has stood out the most to me.

When I was appointed to the Senate, I became a member of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, of which Senator Pépin was already a member. She had already developed the reputation of a parliamentarian who was concerned not only about the fate of our soldiers abroad, but also about the impact our decisions had on military families. The spouses of our soldiers are also true heroes, because they give the gift of their better half to defend our country here and abroad. More often than not, these heroes are primarily women who raise their families on their own while their husband is on a mission.

Senator Pépin would rightfully say that it is up to us to support these women when they need us, and not only when their spouse is wounded or killed in combat. To quote Senator Pépin: "These women are just as dedicated to the Canadian Forces. Their lives, too, are shaped by the military, with its frequent moves and a lifestyle a world apart from that of civilians. These women and their children live in unique circumstances and must often face numerous financial, professional, personal and emotional challenges."

Many support groups and organizations have been created to provide assistance to military families. We owe Senator Pépin a debt of gratitude for contributing to their establishment.

Honourable senators, I know I speak on behalf of everyone when I say that, thanks to her leadership in this area, we will continue to look after military families and ensure that they get the support they deserve.

[English]

Honourable senators, I have spoken many times with Senator Pépin about her beloved Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and I want honourable senators to know that there is a huge military presence in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. Senator Dallaire has mentioned the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean, but there is also a large air force base there, and I have no doubt that the influence of those two bases on Senator Pépin has helped develop her huge dedication on this particular matter of military families.

We have invited the air force to attend at room 256-S this afternoon from five until seven o'clock, and I hope honourable senators will have the chance to drop by so that the air force may say a proper "good-bye" to Senator Pépin.

• (1530)

[Translation]

Hon. Joan Fraser: Honourable senators, nearly everything has been said, certainly enough so that anyone reading today's *Debates of the Senate* will understand just how much we all realize what a privilege it has been to work in the same place as Senator Lucie Pépin.

I know I am not the only one who feels very humble when I think of the long list of things she has accomplished in her life. But in order to put a more human face on the portrait that will appear in the *Debates of the Senate*, I would like to add two small details that I have always found charming, as Lucie knows.

First of all, imagine our amazing, beautiful and elegant Lucie, who regularly attends the Saint-Tite western festival. Picture her in her cowboy hat and boots, taking part in everything with legendary enthusiasm. I think that is a great image.

[English]

The second thing is that this extraordinary woman of elegance with the soft voice and the sweet smile is a rally car racing driver, and if you have ever had the privilege of having her drive you from Ottawa to Montreal, you believe it.

[Translation]

When Lucie Pépin commits to doing something, she goes for it.

On a personal note, I would like to thank her. When I arrived in the Senate, Senator Pépin was the deputy whip on our side. We all know how intimidated people can feel when they arrive in the Senate. It is new, a bit strange and rather intimidating. For me — and I know this is true for dozens of other senators — it was the warmth, generosity and enthusiasm of Lucie Pépin that quickly

made me feel welcome and able to contribute, at least a little bit, to the work of this institution that Lucie has served so well.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, Lucie.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of certain members of the family of our colleague, Senator Pépin, namely her two granddaughters, Alex and Sydney, who are accompanied by a distinguished member of the Privy Council of Canada, the Honourable Marcel Prud'homme.

On behalf of all honourable senators, welcome to the Senate of Canada.

THE HONOURABLE LUCIE PÉPIN

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Hon. Lucie Pépin: Honourable senators, I want to thank you very much for your tributes. As you can see, I am moved by some of the things you have brought up that I had completely forgotten about.

To me, it is very moving to listen to you. Today, I speak with a heavy heart because it is never easy to leave a place to which you have devoted 14 years of your life. It is even more difficult to leave behind colleagues you enjoyed working with and enjoyed seeing every day.

I want to sincerely thank all of you for your cooperation. Each and every one of you has contributed in your own way to making my time in the Senate useful, instructive and pleasant.

Upon leaving, many of our Senate colleagues have focused on this great Senate family. The administrative and support staff and the security staff are a group I have grown attached to and we like and respect one another.

To all those wonderful people, I reiterate my affection and my gratitude for their dedication.

My thanks go to the people of my senatorial designation of Shawinigan. They allowed me to play my role as senator without making me feel as though I had to compete with the member of the House at any given time. I am proud to have represented them.

I can assure the person who takes over this role in the district of Shawinigan that it is a wonderful, beautiful area.

I want to thank the various members of my staff for their professionalism and their loyalty to our shared ideal of social justice.

I mention Momar because I would not have been as brilliant in committee; Stéphanie, my right-hand woman; Yina, my smile of the day, as well as Évelyne and Marie-Ève.

Honourable senators, I realize that I am about to turn a page in my life, one that has been open for nearly 50 years, when I became an activist of necessity.

This may come as a surprise, but the education I received from the nuns indirectly led me to an active political life. I received my education from the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary and the Sisters of Sainte-Anne, but the Grey Nuns trained me as a nurse.

The strength, wisdom and solidarity of these nuns influenced me from a young age. They showed me how to become involved and serve others.

I want to thank them for having made me understand and appreciate the importance of compassion and solidarity.

I was certain that being a nurse would be enough to make me useful and help others. But that was not the case. I would quickly become an activist for gender equality.

I had always felt mothers were being wronged. They often had no choice about pregnancy.

This was when women gave birth at home. Medicare came into existence after I finished my training as a nurse. At that time, I often gave my name to a doctor who would call me at night or on the weekend and say, "I have a patient," — because I am from St-Jean d'Iberville — "who is in the countryside or in Mont-Saint-Grégoire and who just called to tell me that she is about to give birth to her first, fifth or tenth child." At that time, French-Canadian families had 12 or 14 children. The doctor would ask me to go and get the patient ready before he arrived.

So, I would drive to the patient's home even though I did not have my driver's licence. By the time the doctor arrived, the woman had inevitably given birth. However, we often had to put the patient and her baby into the back of the doctor's car and the doctor would take her to the hospital because she was hemorrhaging.

In those days, women clearly had no control over their lives since they did not even have a say in their own reproductive matters. A woman who can bring a pregnancy to term and give birth to a baby can certainly sign her own medical consent forms. Every time a woman had to have an operation, whether it was to remove her appendix or to give birth, the husband had to sign. I did not think this was right. And even when the newborn had to undergo surgery, the father had to sign even though it was the woman who had carried the child. I wondered, "Why can she not sign?" I was told, "I am sorry. It is the father, the husband, who has the rights." These events caused me to want to change this state of affairs.

• (1540)

The nursing profession opened my eyes to these obvious facts. I joined forces with several other people who were equally motivated to correct these injustices. Our combined actions produced significant results. During this period, and with Dr. Lise Fortier, the first female obstetrician-gynaecologist in Quebec, I opened the first family planning clinic. That was in 1966, when it was against the law, but above all, against the Catholic religion. I can assure you that the priests were not very happy about this and spoke out against it, but that did not change a thing.

In 1969, when family planning clinics were legalized, I opened clinics across Canada, in all university hospitals from Newfoundland to British Columbia.

In my opinion, birth control formed the basis of the evolution of the status of women in Canada. As we all know, however, Canada has been without any legislation to prohibit elective abortion since 1991, when the Senate defeated Bill C-43. Rest assured, honourable senators, that I will always have enough energy to convince you not to meddle with the termination of pregnancy legislation.

The progress achieved since my frustrating days as a nurse prompted me to work actively and full time for women's rights.

I then had the opportunity to work in jobs in which I could make a difference. Specifically, I think of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, through which we went head-to-head with Prime Minister Trudeau to get women's rights enshrined in the Constitution. What a beautiful time that was.

My position of member of Parliament allowed me to be at the centre of the action and to directly influence the legislation that would affect women and children. We passed legislation on child care services, but we still needed to pass a very important piece of legislation concerning abused women. It was illegal to beat one's neighbour, male or female, although a husband had the right to beat his wife because that was considered a private matter. Thus, police were often faced with situations in which they could hear screams coming from inside a house in front of which they were standing, but they were powerless, because they did not have the right to intervene. One of my first missions as an MP was to work on drafting a bill to prevent violence against women. Fortunately, abusing one's spouse is now illegal.

My transition from nurse to member of Parliament happened naturally. And if I may say so, I think we do not listen to nurses enough. There is a convergence between the work of nurses and the work of politicians. Both nurses and politicians are open to others. They are there to serve. They take care of others and want to help them. Nurses, like politicians, advocate for the needs and rights of the public.

After my time in the House of Commons, where I fought for greater equity for women, I ended up in the Senate after a short break.

In the Senate I found women and men who were just as committed. Our life experiences and our concerns are different, but we are all determined to improve the daily lives of Canadians.

In the Senate, and also in the House of Commons, I did my best to have social justice incorporated into the laws that govern our country. Many people feel marginalized in our society, and I believe I have done my best to give them a voice.

[English]

I hope I have contributed to building a more balanced society. I leave it to history to determine what was successful and what was less successful.

In my role as a senator, I have had the opportunity to discover the courage of military spouses. They became my heroines and heroes. I was able to work with them to ensure that their valuable

contributions to the vitality of the Canadian Forces is recognized and that their quality of life is constantly being improved. As I am fond of saying, the reason the members of our military can do such a good job is because their wives and husbands are standing behind them supporting them.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the ministers of defence we have had since 2000. Each of them made it easy for me to have access to military bases. I was supported equally well by Liberal Ministers Eggleton and Graham and Conservative Ministers O'Connor and MacKay. I believe this is proof that non-partisan working relationships still have a role in this place.

Contributing to society is like working on a puzzle. The more we work together, the faster it goes.

Honourable senators, I would once again like to emphasize my hope that you will work alongside the military authorities who work so hard to adequately support the families of members of the Canadian Forces. I am convinced that I can count on you. In fact, I believe that two of my fellow senators may be ready to take on the role.

On another issue, I have spent much time on an issue that I hope you will continue to pursue, namely, the representation of women in politics.

[Translation]

The time has come to correct this democratic deficit. Canadian women are having difficulty reaching a critical mass in our political institutions. The equal participation of women in the decision-making process should not simply be demanded as a matter of justice; it should also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account.

Violence against aboriginal women throughout Canada is an intolerable reality. This human rights crisis needs more attention.

Honourable senators, young people are the future of a country. They are also part of its present state. The role of our youth in building a dynamic and prosperous country is vital.

I have met quite a number of young people during these past 14 years. I find our youth to be a very active group with a heightened awareness of social justice, peace, human rights, health and education. Our young people are talented. They have ideas, skills and energy to spare. The group of Senate pages made that very clear last Wednesday at the Speaker's annual barbecue.

As parliamentarians, parents and mentors, we must continue to elicit the opinions of our young people and to take them seriously. We must ensure that their ideas and opinions are heard. Naturally, it is up to them to speak out at the right time and in the right place.

[English]

My dear colleagues, once again the legitimacy of the Senate and the effectiveness of our work are being questioned. This is nothing new. These subjects were being debated when I first entered the Senate, and I see that the debate is ongoing. In fact, some political

observers believe that Senate reform is one of the most constant elements of Canadian politics. These debates must not keep us from making a valuable contribution to our parliamentary system.

[Translation]

Of course, entire parts of our work go unnoticed because they take place off camera and far from journalists' microphones. Journalists scour our expenses, but they should be doing the same for our work, and more often.

The Kirby and Keon reports on health and mental health received a lot of coverage, yet the Senate produces quality reports quite regularly.

I am leaving with a heavy, but happy, heart. It was an honour to have served in this upper chamber in which Canadians discuss their choices as a society. It was truly a very rewarding experience that gave me the opportunity to appreciate the wealth of talent that our country has to offer.

• (1550)

[English]

If Prime Minister Stephen Harper had extended the privilege of consulting me with regard to his Senate reform, I would have advised him to extend the retirement age to 80. However, I am under no illusion; I know I will not have the opportunity or the courage to propose such a thing to him.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, I wish you health and happiness for the rest of your working lives. And who knows, perhaps someday we will see one another at the Saint-Tite western festival in the Mauricie region, which is part of my district. I invite you to experience this event in my senatorial designation at least once in your lifetime. It is worth it!

Once again, thank you for everything and I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you again.

[English]

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

Hon. Charlie Watt: Honourable senators, bear with me.

[Editor's Note: Senator Watt spoke in Inuktitut.]

Honourable senators, I rise today to draw attention to National Aboriginal Day in Canada, which is June 21 this year. The Canadian Constitution recognizes our Aboriginal peoples as Indians, First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

The date for National Aboriginal Day was proclaimed by Governor General Roméo LeBlanc in 1996 as a way to celebrate the culture and heritage of our peoples as the first inhabitants of this land and to acknowledge their contribution to this great country.

Now that the government is moving forward with its mandate, I am pleased that in the Throne Speech it committed to focusing on Aboriginal issues. I look forward to proposing innovative tax reform for our northern communities, which would increase the purchasing power of northern residents, presently at approximately 27 per cent compared to that of people who do not live in the North.

Tax reform is needed, combined with more housing and storage facilities and better educational opportunities. This should include funding for Inuit language television programming. All of it would be a step in the right direction to begin to lessen the financial burden that currently creates the poverty and resulting social issues faced in northern communities, particularly Inuit communities.

This government has also committed itself to major crime bill reforms. I would hope that we will examine the issue of Aboriginal justice and implementing programs and initiatives that could potentially lower the Aboriginal population in our prisons.

Finally, I look forward to welcoming more Aboriginal employees in the Senate, House of Commons and Library of Parliament as a part of the government's commitment to fair representation and garnering better understanding, which was undertaken by this government.

Nakurmiik.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AND ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS ACT— 2010 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Annual Report of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada on the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act for the 2010 fiscal year, pursuant to section 25 of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act.

[English]

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

2010-11 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Transportation Safety Board of Canada for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011, pursuant to the Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act, S.C. 1989, c. 3, sbs. 13(3).

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

REPORT PURSUANT TO RULE 104 TABLED

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 104 of the *Rules of the Senate*, I have the honour to table the first report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, which deals with the expenses incurred by the committee during the Third Session of the Fortieth Parliament.

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 85.)

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

REPORT PURSUANT TO RULE 104 TABLED

Hon. Maria Chaput: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 104 of the *Rules of the Senate*, I have the honour to table the first report of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, which deals with the expenses incurred by the committee during the Third Session of the Fortieth Parliament.

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 87.)

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS MODERNIZATION BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette presented Bill S-203, An Act to modernize the composition of the boards of directors of certain corporations, financial institutions and parent Crown corporations, and in particular to ensure the balanced representation of women and men on those boards.

(Bill read first time.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the second time?

(On motion of Senator Hervieux-Payette, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[English]

CANADA-CHINA LEGISLATIVE ASSOCIATION CANADA-JAPAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY, AUGUST 2-8, 2009—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation respecting its participation at the Thirtieth General Assembly of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, held in Pattaya City, Chonburi, Thailand, from August 2 to 8, 2009.

CANADA-CHINA LEGISLATIVE ASSOCIATION

[Translation]

CO-CHAIRS' ANNUAL VISIT TO CHINA.
APRIL 1-11, 2010—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation respecting its participation at the Co-Chairs' Annual Visit to China, held in Beijing, Xining, Lhasa, and Chengdu, People's Republic of China, from April 1 to 11, 2010.

BILATERAL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 9-19, 2010—
REPORT TABLED

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation respecting its participation at the Thirteenth Bilateral Meeting, held in Beijing, Tianjin, Nanjing, Changshu and Shanghai, People's Republic of China, from September 9 to 19, 2010.

• (1600)

CANADA-CHINA LEGISLATIVE ASSOCIATION
CANADA-JAPAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,
SEPTEMBER 19-25, 2010—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation respecting its participation at the Thirty-first General Assembly of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, held in Hanoi, Vietnam, from September 19 to 25, 2010.

CANADA-CHINA LEGISLATIVE ASSOCIATION

CO-CHAIRS' ANNUAL VISIT TO CHINA,
MARCH 11-19, 2011—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation respecting its participation at the Co-Chairs' Annual Visit to China, held in Beijing, Chongqing, Dali and Kunming, People's Republic of China, from March 11 to 19, 2011.

CANADA-CHINA LEGISLATIVE ASSOCIATION
CANADA-JAPAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASIA PACIFIC
PARLIAMENTARY FORUM,
JANUARY 11-15, 2009—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation respecting its participation at the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, held in Vientiane, Laos, from January 11 to 15, 2009.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE
TO STUDY APPLICATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
ACT AND RELEVANT REGULATIONS, DIRECTIVES
AND REPORTS AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE
SINCE BEGINNING OF SECOND SESSION
OF FORTIETH PARLIAMENT

Hon. Marie Chaput: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages be authorized to study and to report on the application of the *Official Languages Act* and of the regulations and directives made under it, within those institutions subject to the Act;

That the committee also be authorized to study the reports and documents published by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, the President of the Treasury Board, and the Commissioner of Official Languages, and any other subject concerning official languages;

That the documents received, evidence heard and business accomplished on this subject by the committee since the beginning of the Second Session of the Fortieth Parliament be referred to the committee;

That the committee report from time to time to the Senate but no later than September 30, 2012, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until December 31, 2012.

[English]

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE
TO STUDY NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE
POLICIES, PRACTICES, CIRCUMSTANCES AND
CAPABILITIES AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE
SINCE BEGINNING OF THIRD SESSION
OF FORTIETH PARLIAMENT

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence be authorized to examine and report on Canada's national security and defence policies, practices, circumstances and capabilities.

That the papers and evidence received and taken and the work accomplished by the committee on this subject since the beginning of the Third Session of the Fortieth-Parliament be referred to the Committee.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO URGE GOVERNMENT TO OFFICIALLY APOLOGIZE TO THE SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY AND TO THE INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED IN THE KOMAGATA MARU INCIDENT

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Government of Canada officially apologize in Parliament to the South Asian community and to the individuals impacted in the 1914 Komagata Maru incident.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS AND VETERANS OF ARMED FORCES AND CURRENT AND FORMER MEMBERS OF THE RCMP, COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES AND CHARTER AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE FROM FORTIETH PARLIAMENT

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence be authorized to study:

- (a) services and benefits provided to members of the Canadian Forces; to veterans who have served honourably in Her Majesty's Canadian Armed Forces in the past; to members and former members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and its antecedents; and all of their families;
- (b) commemorative activities undertaken by the Department of Veterans' Affairs Canada, to keep alive for all Canadians the memory of Canadian veterans' achievements and sacrifices; and
- (c) continuing implementation of the New Veterans' Charter;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and the work accomplished by the Committee on this subject during the Fortieth Parliament be referred to the Committee; and

That the Committee report to the Senate no later than June 17th 2012, and that the Committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 90 days after the tabling of the final report.

USE OF LANDMINES AND CLUSTER MUNITIONS

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Elizabeth Hubley: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 57(2), I give notice that, two days hence:

I shall call the attention of the Senate to the use of landmines and cluster munitions.

[Translation]

QUESTION PERIOD

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADIAN CITIZEN DETAINED IN LEBANON

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: Honourable senators, I would like to begin with a short preamble so that you can fully understand the situation in which one of my fellow citizens from New Brunswick finds himself.

It was a Sunday, the morning of Mother's Day, when the Tepper family from Drummond, New Brunswick, came to my home. Father, wife and sister came to ask for my help because they believed that there was no one trustworthy to turn to.

Upon his arrival in Beirut, Mr. Tepper, a 44-year-old, long-time farmer, entrepreneur, and exporter, was arrested following a red alert issued and sought by Interpol for allegedly shipping potatoes at the end of December 2007.

Of course, I did not venture into this matter without doing my homework, as we say. I did my research, honourable senators, I wrote many letters, I met with ambassadors, essentially because my fellow citizen, Mr. Tepper, a farmer on a business trip organized by Potatoes Canada, financed by the federal government, went to Lebanon to promote the export of Canadian potatoes and, in his case, the export of potatoes from Atlantic Canada.

My research shows that between September 2008 and today, there was a continuous exchange of information by the Department of Justice, the RCMP and Algeria's justice ministry. On May 4, almost two months ago, Mr. Tepper's lawyer, Mr. Gillis, requested a copy of all the correspondence. To date, he has not received any of the documents.

My first question for the leader is the following: At the next cabinet meeting, or at the end of this question period, can you ask Minister Baird, Minister Ablonczy and Minister Nicholson to fast-track all the documents pertaining to the detainment in Beirut of Mr. Tepper, a farmer from New Brunswick?

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator for the question.

As honourable senators will appreciate, the Privacy Act limits the information available to me. However, I can say that the consular officials in Lebanon have been actively providing assistance and support to Mr. Tepper and his family since his arrest. Consular officials regularly visit Mr. Tepper to ensure his health and well-being and are constantly in contact with his lawyers and family to provide assistance, support and updates on his case. Officials will continue to engage with senior Lebanese authorities to request due process and a timely and transparent handling of his file.

With regard to the demand for documents, this is a matter between Mr. Tepper's lawyer and officials within the Lebanese and Algerian judicial systems. Those requests are best addressed by those governments and by Mr. Tepper's lawyer.

• (1610)

Senator Ringuette: I did not ask the honourable leader to recite what the officials at DFAIT have told her to answer if she was asked a question with regard to Mr. Tepper's file. I specifically asked the leader to help this family and this honest Canadian, and to ask these three ministers to fast-track the information to his lawyers. This is not a question of proxy or of consular affairs; this is a question of political will.

Will the leader please ask for this information to be fast-tracked to Mr. Tepper's lawyers?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, this is a matter on which the Canadian government, through its consular services, is working very hard, as is Mr. Tepper's member of Parliament. We are dealing with it through consular facilities. That is the avenue that is open and available to us. Consular officials have assured us that they are working extremely hard on this file.

With regard to documents, the lawyer for Mr. Tepper is dealing with the governments of Algeria and Lebanon. All I can say is that the Canadian consular services are providing the very best service available to assist Mr. Tepper, his lawyers and his family.

Senator Ringuette: In an extraordinary press conference today on Parliament Hill, Mr. Tepper, a Canadian citizen who has been detained in a jail cell in Beirut because of a flow of information and allegations that not even his lawyer can obtain through the Canadian government, made an extraordinary request to the Minister of Justice of Canada. This request was with regard to those allegations against Mr. Tepper.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, since 2008, has been telling the Department of Justice that Mr. Tepper has fraudulent inspection documents from that agency. That agency is a Crown corporation. By the way, that agency is also being defended by lawyers from the Department of Justice, the same Department of Justice that is sending information to Algeria.

With regard to allegations that the Minister of Justice knows about, if he agrees that Canadian Food Inspection Agency inspection certificates were forged by this Canadian, then he should begin criminal charges against Mr. Tepper. These criminal charges should be sent to INTERPOL, and INTERPOL should request Lebanon to send Mr. Tepper home to get a fair trial, in accordance with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada.

The Minister of Justice has been aware of this situation since 2008. If the Minister of Justice believes that these Canadian documents were not forged in Canada and were not forged by this Canadian citizen, then he has the responsibility to ask the Minister of Justice in Lebanon to send this Canadian citizen back home.

There are only two options here for the Minister of Justice: Either the minister believes that this Canadian forged the document in Canada, in a Canadian document, and so he should be sent back home, or he does not believe this and he should request that Mr. Tepper be sent back home to his family.

Senator LeBreton: The honourable senator has put on the record today some information that she is obviously privy to. I can only repeat that I will be happy to provide to the appropriate officials with a copy of what the honourable senator has said in the chamber today.

I can only repeat what I said before, and this applies to this case and to many similar cases. The information that is provided is subject to the Privacy Act. The other information that I can convey to honourable senators is what I have already conveyed. The Canadian government, through its consular officials in Lebanon, is working to assist Mr. Tepper and is in regular contact with him and his lawyer.

Honourable senators, I cannot go beyond that. However, I will bring the honourable senator's comments to the attention of the appropriate people and ascertain whether or not there is any information that we can provide in addition to what I have already said.

Senator Ringuette: In a letter to Mr. Tepper's lawyer from the Department of Justice, dated May 12, 2011, one of the items stated by the counsel and litigation team leader for the Minister of Justice in regard to this issue reads:

Third, while offences occurring in Canada may be the proper subject of prosecution in Canada, it is also possible that they would be the appropriate subject of prosecution elsewhere.

In other words, with regard to the alleged forgery of Canadian Food Inspection Agency documents, a Canadian, Mr. Tepper, has never set foot in Algeria. This document is implying that we in Canada, with alleged forged documents by a Canadian in Canada, will contract out prosecution to the Algerian government for this man.

I understand that the leader cannot provide an answer today, but I am saying that these are very serious offences. This Canadian — a good farmer, a family person, a person who immigrated to Canada believing in this country — has spent over 90 days in jail in Beirut without knowing what the Canadian government has charged him with or what the Canadian government has informed Algeria about, and the leader is talking about consular affairs.

Mr. Tepper's eldest daughter is graduating from high school this weekend. I hope this government will do the right thing with regard to this honest, hard-working Canadian citizen. Do the right thing and bring him home now.

• (1620)

Senator LeBreton: The honourable senator obviously feels very strongly about this. It is a troubling situation. However, as the Leader of the Government in the Senate, I can only reply that there are considerations under the Privacy Act, as information in this case is not widely distributed. I am simply trying to reassure honourable senators that this gentleman is being accorded every possible service that is provided. Consular services, as are being provided to Mr. Tepper, are provided for all Canadians who find themselves in difficulty abroad.

Honourable senators, I cannot pluck out of the air an answer that would be satisfactory to Senator Ringuette other than to say that I will pass along her concerns. There will be a transcript of what the honourable senator has said here today. I will ensure that the proper authorities are aware of what she has had to say. However, that does not change the situation.

Consular officials and others, including the member of Parliament, have been working very closely with Mr. Tepper's family in Canada. Our consular officials in Lebanon have been working with Mr. Tepper, his lawyer and his family.

I am sorry, honourable senators, but that is the extent of what I can say. As difficult as it is for my honourable friend to accept that answer, that is the only answer I can provide today.

Senator Ringuette: Honourable senators, I am not asking for answers from the leader today. I would like her to bring this matter to her cabinet colleagues at the next cabinet meeting and get answers. This man's family needs answers; New Brunswickers need answers.

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I have indicated that I would obtain a transcript of the senator's remarks in the Senate chamber today and ensure that it is provided to the appropriate people.

[Translation]

SUDAN

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Honourable senators, I would like to follow along the same lines, but perhaps more generally.

In 2005, Senator Jaffer and I were sent to Darfur to see to the implementation of the mission of the African Union and the United Nations, which were trying to put an end to the ongoing genocide. Around the same time, SHIRBRIG, which was the United Nations high readiness brigade led by a Canadian, was deployed to strengthen the peace agreement between Northern and Southern Sudan. SHIRBRIG and the Canadians have withdrawn, and this capacity of the United Nations no longer exists.

In a few weeks, Southern Sudan will become a country, a nation, a state; however, the government of Khartoum continues to terrorize southeast Sudan to the point that United Nations members are being kidnapped and killed in the border region between the two countries. The United Nations forces present and

the Egyptian forces have even indicated that they intend to intervene.

Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us whether Canada has taken concrete action or an interest in this new democracy, or whether Canada plans on getting involved to help the United Nations prevent a renewed civil war in this country?

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, we are all aware that the people of Southern Sudan voted overwhelmingly for self-determination, and the process was deemed to be fair and well run.

With regard to Canada's contribution, as I have mentioned previously in answer to Senator Dallaire's questions, Canada has contributed over \$800 million to Sudan in the last five years for humanitarian assistance, development aid, security and peace building. Other than putting that on the record again and recognizing the wishes of the population of Southern Sudan, I have nothing more to report today. If Senator Dallaire requires additional information, I would happy to try to obtain it for him.

Senator Dallaire: We have provided funds for the Darfur scenario, and we have about 40 soldiers involved in the different headquarters in Darfur. I am talking about North and South Sudan. I am talking about a nascent democracy that has been supported but is now in peril of falling catastrophically into civil war, with the UN there, something I have experienced personally in the past.

We are sitting on our hands with no engagement. It is rather interesting that we are prepared to get into Libya and assist them, and I am totally in agreement with that assistance. In fact, we should have been on the ground protecting them seven weeks ago. However, we are not even present in this other situation. It is bad enough that we are not sitting on the Security Council, but we are not even present as part of the R2P initiators who want to influence that situation politically and diplomatically, not necessarily militarily.

Can the leader tell us if there is an inclination by Canada, apart from throwing cash at the problem, to take a leadership role in preventing this nascent democracy from turning to civil war?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I do not think one can simply say that we have thrown cash at them. The money that was provided was for humanitarian assistance, security and peace building.

With regard to a future role in the Sudan, I will take the question as notice.

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: I would like to ask a supplementary question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

I was recently in Juba in Southern Sudan, and I was also in Khartoum. July 9 is arriving soon. I did not see what we were doing to have a growing presence in Juba, the capital of Southern Sudan.

Last weekend, we read in the papers that there was terrible killing in the Nuba Mountains, and the Sudanese government has threatened a worse massacre in Eastern Sudan, as they did in Darfur. What are we doing to protect the Southern Sudanese and the people of Sudan?

Senator LeBreton: Canada has condemned the escalation of violence, and we urged all involved to work toward a peaceful transition to partition in early July. We have also called on the northern and southern representatives to withdraw their forces without delay and to ensure the protection of civilians. Canada also called on both sides to respect the comprehensive peace agreement that ended Sudan's north-south civil war in 2005. The government, as a result of the financial aid that we have provided, has a great interest in Sudan.

As I indicated to Senator Dallaire, if there are further updates on the situation in Sudan, I will be happy to provide them.

• (1630)

Senator Jaffer: Honourable senators, I was in Juba, and I have to commend our government for the great work it is doing in development and on maternal health in Southern Sudan.

Sadly, there is now great instability and again a breakout of war. What will our government do to help bring peace to that region?

Senator LeBreton: Again, as the honourable senator knows, the government has condemned the escalation of hostilities and, as I mentioned to her and to Senator Dallaire a moment ago, I will ask for an update on the situation in Sudan from the Canadian government's perspective and provide a written answer.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

WORLD WAR II BOMBER COMMAND MEDAL

Hon. Michael A. Meighen: Honourable senators, this past Saturday, June 18, 2011, marked exactly three years or 1,095 days since the Senate unanimously passed following motion:

That the Senate urge the Government of Canada to take appropriate steps to end the long and unjust delay in recognition of Bomber Command service and sacrifice by Canadians in the liberation of Europe during the Second World War.

On March 24, 2010, prior to the second anniversary of the Senate's recommendation, the Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator LeBreton, stated:

The government is aware of the unanimous recommendation of the Senate and believes in its importance. . . . Hopefully, the question of Senator Meighen will spur me and them to get moving on this, as I am well aware that some of these people are quite elderly.

[Senator Jaffer]

Subsequent to that, Senator Segal posed questions on July 6, 2010, and October 28, 2010, to ascertain what progress had been made. A September 27, 2010, delayed answer to one of Senator Segal's questions stated:

Although Veterans Affairs Canada has no authority or responsibility for the creation of new honours, the Minister of Veterans Affairs has written to the Governor General asking that the creation of a new honour, for members of Second World War Bomber Command, be considered by the Honours Policy Committee.

How many more of these gallant individuals will have to pass away before the Senate's recommendation is finally acted upon? It seems this ball is being passed from one player to another without any resolution.

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank Senator Meighen for his question and for quoting me accurately.

I believe that the government owes a great deal of gratitude to all of those young Canadians who crossed the Atlantic to join the Royal Air Force and the Bomber Command.

I am informed that the matter of formal recognition has now been reviewed by the Honours Policy Subcommittee, and I am also informed that the Honours Policy Committee has yet to meet. I will attempt within the next few days to find out when they will meet so that this next step can proceed. I hope another year will not pass to precipitate the honourable senator having to ask me the question again. I fully support what he has said.

Senator Meighen: I am sure that with her persuasive powers the leader can considerably lessen that 1,095-day delay. It is time for action and the end of discussion. There is unanimous feeling in the Senate. I am certain that the question is one of sorting out the bureaucracy to bring about this very well-deserved recognition of our heroes.

Senator LeBreton: I am in total agreement with what Senator Meighen just said, and I thank him for raising the matter today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AT KINGSTON

PRIVATE BILL TO AMEND CONSTITUTION OF CORPORATION—SECOND READING

Hon. Lowell Murray moved second reading of Bill S-1001, An Act respecting Queen's University at Kingston.

He said: Honourable senators, first, let me thank Senator Day for having presented this bill at first reading in my absence last week.

This bill is identical to a bill with exactly the same number, Bill S-1001, which was read the second time and referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on March 24 last. Before the committee could be seized of it, dissolution intervened and the measure died on the Order Paper.

I spoke at second reading at the time, and I am sure my speech is still fresh in the memories of honourable senators. For those of you who might want the pleasure of reviewing my intervention, it is found at pages 2191 and 2192 of the March 24, 2011, *Debates of the Senate*.

In a nutshell, Queen's University is here to seek an amendment to its charter that goes back to 1840, when legislation was passed by the Parliament of the United Province of Canada, creating Queen's College at Kingston. That was followed by a Royal Charter by Queen Victoria in 1841.

After Confederation, it was determined that the charter of the university could not be amended by either the Province of Ontario or the Province of Quebec, the two constituent parts of the United Province of Canada, or by both of them acting together, but only by the Parliament of Canada.

I placed on the record on the last occasion that I brought in amendments to the Queen's Charter, April 25, 1996, a little more than 15 years ago, a good deal of the legal and constitutional history and background to this matter. I hope that might suffice for those of you who are avid enough to want to look it up, as Casey Stengel used to say.

Queen's University can hardly be said to have been a bother to the Parliament of Canada on this matter. They have come here only eight times since Confederation to have their charter amended. The first time was in the 1880s when Sir John A. Macdonald, the then Member of Parliament for Kingston, brought the bill through the House of Commons and then through the Senate, and the last time, as I say, was about 15 years ago.

First, this bill seeks to amend the Queen's charter by reducing the membership of the board of trustees from 44 to a more workable 25 members and to empower the board to make bylaws regarding its own governance.

Second, the bill would continue the University Council, which is essentially an advisory body, and empower them to enact bylaws regarding their own composition, governance and the appointment and manner of appointment of various officers, including the chancellor and the rector of the university.

• (1640)

Honourable senators will note that the authority for these bodies to make bylaws means that, as we have sometimes done in the past, we are essentially patriating parts of the Queen's charter back to the authorities in Kingston so that they can amend those parts themselves and, henceforth, there will be no need for them to come to Parliament with respect to these parts of the charter.

Honourable senators, I will not detain you further. I have indicated the sources of further information for any of you who may seek it. I may say that, if it is the wish of the Senate to send

this bill to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, the university's legal counsel, a lawyer in Kingston, Ontario, Mr. Robert Little Q.C., is standing by and waiting to be summoned if it is the desire of the Senate and of the committee to hear from him.

Honourable senators, I thank you for your attention and I commend this bill to your favourable consideration.

The Hon. the Speaker: Are honourable senators ready for the question?

Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Bill read second time.)

DECLARATIONS OF PRIVATE INTEREST

Hon. Serge Joyal: Honourable senators, pursuant to the rule of this chamber that deals with conflicts of interest, I want to signal to the chamber that I might be in a conflict of interest in that a book about the future of the Crown in Canada, to which I contributed, will soon be published and released by the Queen's University Press.

The Hon. the Speaker: I thank the Honourable Senator Joyal for that declaration.

Hon. Hugh Segal: Honourable senators, pursuant to the same rule referred to by Senator Joyal, as I am also a contributor to that same book, as well as being involved with Queen's in other ways, I have to make the same declaration as he did, which I do with great affection and respect.

The Hon. the Speaker: That is so recorded.

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

(On motion of Senator Murray, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.)

BAHA'I PEOPLE IN IRAN

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mobina S.B. Jaffer rose pursuant to notice of June 9, 2011:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the deteriorating human rights situation of the Baha'i people in Iran.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise before you today to call the attention of the Senate to the deteriorating human rights situation of the Baha'is in Iran. I would like to begin by

addressing the more general topic of the human rights situation in Iran and its relevance for Canada. Before I do that, I would like to recognize the work of my dear friend, Susanne Tamas, who is here in the gallery with us, along with Geoffrey Cameron. They are strong advocates of the Baha'i community of Canada.

Despite the difficult relationship between Canada and Iran, we are bound together by strong human ties. Canada is home to a growing Iranian diaspora and the family and friends of Iranian citizens. Indeed, we are well-wishers of Iran, a great nation with an ancient culture and much to offer the modern world. Canada, as a country that prides itself on our culture of rights and diversities, stands in solidarity with those who are working for the same values and goals in Iran.

While Iran remains an ongoing security concern because of its nuclear program, we must not divert attention from the severe and worsening human rights situation. As we know, real and lasting security rests on the pillars of human rights, democratic governance and the rule of law.

As former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in 2005 the world "must advance the causes of security, development and human rights together, otherwise none will succeed."

That is why the Parliament and Government of Canada have remained seized of the human rights situation in Iran for many years. We must not waver in our support of Iranian citizens' efforts to bring about progressive change.

The Iranian government continues to prosecute a brutal campaign of oppression against its citizens. Last September, the UN catalogued the abuses perpetrated by Iran, including torture and cruelty, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, public executions and executions of juvenile defenders, the use of stoning as a measure of execution, violation of women's rights, violations of the rights of minorities, and restrictions on freedom of assembly and association and freedom of opinion and expression. Such brutality has become the hallmark of a government that pays little attention to the dignity of its own citizens. Iran is negligent of both its ancient traditions and its international obligations to uphold universal standards of human rights.

The human rights situation in Iran continues to worsen day by day. Last January, Human Rights Watch warned of a deepening human rights crisis. In April, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom reported that human rights and religious freedom conditions in Iran have regressed to a point not seen since the early days of the Islamic revolution. The worsening human rights situation affects all Iranians, and time does not permit me to do justice to all those suffering at the hands of the authorities.

Some groups have been particularly affected, including women, journalists, human rights activists, ethnic minorities and religious minorities. Arbitrary arrest, lack of due process and torture are experienced all too frequently by Iranian citizens. A Canadian, Hamid Ghassemi-Shall, still sits on death row because of spurious charges.

The Baha'is in Iran: Who are they and what is their history?

Honourable senators, I would like to speak to you about one group in particular. The Baha'i community of Iran is the country's largest non-Muslim religious minority and its treatment is a case study of the real intentions of the Iranian government with respect to its human rights obligations.

As honourable senators are all aware, I grew up in Uganda learning about the Baha'is. They were building a temple in Kampala. My father worked with them and he taught me the beliefs of the Baha'is. He often said to me that the beliefs of the Baha'is should be the beliefs of us all, and I agree.

The Baha'i faith is an independent, monotheistic, world religion based on the teachings of the 19th century prophet founder Baha'u'llah. Its central teachings include the recognition of the common divine source of all religions and the belief in the fundamental oneness of humanity. Baha'i teachings call for the elimination of all forms of prejudice and urge followers to work for the creation of a global society characterized by peace, unity and justice.

There are approximately five million Baha'is around the world in 218 countries and territories. Here in Canada, the Baha'i community was founded in 1898 and currently includes some 30,000 members. The Baha'i faith originated in Iran in the middle of the 19th century, and early Baha'is came from many social, ethnic and religious backgrounds. They faced severe persecution from the beginning, often spurred by a clerical elite threatened by the spread of post-Islamic religion.

The founder, Baha'u'llah, was exiled from Iran to Iraq, then to Turkey and then to Palestine, which was then under the Ottoman rule. Because Baha'u'llah passed away in Palestine, the Baha'i World Centre emerged in modern-day Israel. Today the international governing council of the Baha'i community is based in the city of Haifa.

I have often visited the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa, and to me the gardens of the centre there are truly a paradise on earth. The centre in Haifa truly represents Baha'i belief of oneness in humanity.

• (1650)

Despite the persecution of the Baha'i community in the country of its birth, Iranian Baha'is were on the forefront of the efforts to bring progressive change to the country. They were involved in the pro-democracy and social reform movements at the turn of the century. They founded the first schools for girls and eradicated illiteracy among Baha'i young women in the 1970s. The community in Tehran founded a hospital that brought modern medicine to excluded religious minorities.

The global spread of the Baha'i faith accelerated in the mid-20th century, turning it gradually into the second most widespread world religion.

Around the world, Baha'is today are engaged in working for social progress. In their grassroots activity, they are dedicated to helping the social development of villages and neighbourhoods. Baha'is join with others to promote the spiritual and material

advancement of their communities. Their approach to social change focuses on transforming communities rather than political agitation.

This is a principle that is important to understand with respect to the ongoing persecution of the Baha'is in Iran. This is a community that believes in the power of non-violence and positive action as a response to oppression. While claiming their rights through legal means in the court of public opinion, they have never resorted to force. Baha'is believe that the most reliable pathway to liberation is to openly serve their country side by side with other Iranians.

Honourable senators, I turn now to the persecution of Baha'is in Iran. The persecution faced by Baha'is in Iran today has few parallels in human history. This is a community of more than 300,000 people that for more than 30 years has been subject to an often explicit state policy focused on its destruction. The intensity of pressure felt by this religious minority is almost impossible for us, as Canadians, to imagine, yet it is our duty as senators, indeed as fellow human beings, to raise our voices in solidarity with their cause.

Baha'is face prosecution in Iran because a hardline clerical elite views their religion as illegitimate, and they are therefore considered to be apostates or opponents of Islam. This attitude toward Baha'is is spread by lies and misinformation channelled through state-controlled media. Baha'is are often falsely accused of being foreign agents working secretly against the nation. The result of such disinformation campaigns is widespread ignorance that perpetuates a culture of prejudice.

Since Iran's 1979 revolution, the views of hardline clerics have become embedded in the law and structure of governance in the country, including the constitution, which does not recognize the Baha'is and limits their access to legal protection. The consequence has been an unyielding wave of persecution that has changed in form over time but has been consistent in intent to destroy all aspects of Baha'i community life and to exile religion into the silence of private belief.

Persecution began at the outset of the revolution. Around 200 Baha'is in positions of leadership were summarily executed or disappeared. Baha'i holy sites were razed to the ground, properties were confiscated, businesses closed, pensions denied, cemeteries desecrated. They were banned from public service, and access to secondary and higher education was denied. Even Baha'i marriages went unrecognized.

Canada opened its doors to thousands of Baha'i refugees during this time, when Iran actively tried to prevent Baha'is from leaving the country.

Honourable senators, I have been a refugee lawyer for over 30 years, and never in my experience have I known our country not to accept refugees who claim to be Baha'is, as we have done. As a refugee lawyer, all I had to show was that an Iranian was a practising Baha'i and my client received immediate acceptance to settle in Canada. This was as a result of well-documented evidence that the Baha'is are persecuted in Iran.

The global outcry against this brutality appeared to have an effect as the sensational forms of persecution gradually declined in the late 1980s, only to be replaced by a new phase of persecution in the form of social and economic pressure.

A 1991 confidential memorandum approved by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei stated clearly the position of the Islamic Republic toward the Baha'i community. The memorandum specifies that the Baha'is should be treated in such a way "that their progress and development are blocked." It specifies that the Baha'is should be denied access to higher education, prevented from holding government jobs, and that their children should be sent to schools "with a strong religious ideology."

In this environment of intensifying pressure, the Baha'i community has been compelled to develop innovative ways to meet basic needs. Among these responses is the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education, an educational initiative launched in 1987 to provide for the education of Baha'i young people who are deprived of access to higher education by official government policy. The *New York Times* called it "an elaborate act of self-preservation."

Today, the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education operates through a blend of online instruction and small seminars and labs, with an affiliate global faculty that stretches around the world, including here in Canada. It offers 17 university-level programs across three faculties, and continues to develop and offer academic programs in sciences, social sciences and the arts.

I am proud to say that seven Canadian universities have recognized the quality of education provided by the Baha'i education institute and they have accepted dozens of graduates for advanced study here in Canada. Most of them took their master's degrees and Ph.D.s back to Iran, where they joined the institute's faculty and have continued to teach others.

Honourable senators, on May 21, Iranian authorities launched yet another attack on the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education, this time raiding more than 30 homes and arresting 16 people. Among those arrested were two graduates of Canadian universities. These are attacks not only on the students and the faculty of the Baha'i education institute, but on the cherished idea that education is the birthright of all.

This latest incident underlines the intention of the Iranian government to carry out its policy to block the well-being of the Baha'i community, because when they deny a people the means to educate their youth, they deny them a way of earning a livelihood and deny them a good life.

This attack follows a worrying trend over the past several years of increasing pressure. In 2004, there were four Baha'is in prison, whereas today there are 93 in jail, for no reason aside from their religion. Arbitrary arrests are used in an attempt to keep the community in a condition of uncertainty and fear.

In 2008, the authorities also jailed the ad hoc Baha'i leadership in Iran, seven individuals who formed a body called the Yaran. I have spoken to you before about these men and women, who have now been held in prison for more than three years. They face

a sentence of 20 years imprisonment. Their lawyer, Shirin Ebadi, a well-known Nobel laureate, has insisted that there is not a shred of evidence to support the charges against them, which include the type of false accusations that Iran has used to vilify Baha'is for decades.

Notwithstanding repeated requests, neither the prisoners nor their attorneys have ever received official copies of the verdict or the ruling on appeal.

May I have five more minutes?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Jaffer: Thank you.

While these seven individuals languish in prison, the Baha'i community remains deprived of its leadership.

Honourable senators, I have conveyed to you a situation of clear injustice and oppression, perpetrated against a peaceful people for no reason other than their religious beliefs. The Baha'i community conducts its affairs with transparency and honesty; it keeps no secret about its beliefs and intentions, with members who want nothing more than to practise their religion and serve their country.

We Canadians are privileged to live in a country where diversity is valued and where we enjoy freedom of religion and belief. I believe that we should all speak out where these same freedoms are denied elsewhere, giving hope to our brothers and sisters who live under constant state pressure, in the name of humanity.

• (1700)

Honourable senators, all my life I have worked with Baha'is. Today I stand before you and I ask you to also stand up for the rights of Baha'is.

Honourable senators, Canada's support for the Baha'is in Iran has been an example of how supporting freedom of religion and beliefs can play a role in our foreign policy. In view of our new emphasis on promoting religious freedom abroad, let us take new steps to call Iran to account for its unacceptable treatment of the Baha'is. Let us stand for the religious rights of Baha'is in Iran.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is there further debate?

Hon. Hugh Segal: I move the adjournment of the debate, honourable senators.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: It has been moved by the Honourable Senator Segal, seconded by the Honourable Senator Di Nino, that further debate in this matter be adjourned until the next sitting of the Senate.

Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk: Honourable senators, I had asked for time for a question of the Honourable Senator Jaffer before the adjournment, if she will take a question.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: We will deal with the motion of Senator Segal later.

Senator Andreychuk: The honourable senator is indicating that there should be new steps taken to help the Baha'i in Iran. I am aware that in the last 40, maybe 50 years, every government in Canada has moved the agenda in the multilateral, bilateral and regional initiatives. What else is the honourable senator suggesting we do now that we have not done in the past, except what I think is the continual, consistent pressure that we have done as a country?

Senator Jaffer: Honourable senators, when the Throne Speech was presented to us, I was pleased that we were looking at opening up an office of religious freedom. The first thing that this office should look at is the situation of the Baha'is in Iran because I believe that they are in the worst condition possible. We have such closeness with their issues and their beliefs that it is the first issue we should look at. That is something that we have not done. We should promote their religious freedom through the office that we will set up.

(On motion of Senator Segal, debate adjourned.)

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN CARE IN MANITOBA

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Sharon Carstairs rose pursuant to notice of June 16, 2011:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the alarming number of aboriginal children in care in the Province of Manitoba and my concerns that the group think that brought about the residential schools and the sixties scoop may be at play again.

She said: Honourable senators, today being National Aboriginal Day, it seems appropriate that I should bring to the attention of the Senate Aboriginal children in my home province.

As of March 31, 2010, one year ago — I cannot get the statistics for this year yet because they are not available — there were 9,120 children in care in my province, by far the largest number in care, percentage wise, in any province in Canada. I am told that as of this year — and, unfortunately, the numbers are just anecdotal at this point — there are even more children in care. It is estimated that 70 per cent of these children are status, non-status or Metis — in other words, Aboriginal children; yet Aboriginal people make up only 15.5 per cent of the population of my province. A comparison with neighbouring Saskatchewan, for example, would indicate that there are fewer than 50 per cent of their children of Aboriginal nature in care in that province.

The question that must be asked is this: Why are so many Aboriginal children in care in the Province of Manitoba? Why are so many of them being removed from their communities and placed primarily in Winnipeg when the vast majority of them do not live in Winnipeg? Why are so many of them being placed in non-Aboriginal families?

Honourable senators, I think it is important to give you some perspective and therefore some history of Aboriginal child welfare in the Province of Manitoba.

Pre-contact with Europeans tells us that Aboriginals had a very defined and complex social and legal structure. If a child lost his or her parents, then the community became responsible for that child. Therefore, the child continued to have access to kinship and a set of values and expectations for behaviour.

After contact with Europeans, it became clear that Europeans showed a lack of confidence in Aboriginal ways of raising their children. This resulted in legislation developing in my province beginning in 1887 and continuing to 2002 with the Child and Family Services Act.

Federally, the Indian Act does not specifically address the issue of children and child welfare, but was amended in 1955 to allow “provincial laws of general application and child welfare laws were considered laws of general application.” However, the provinces were reluctant — not just the Province of Manitoba, all provinces — to fund services on reserves. Therefore, little or no services were provided to these vulnerable children.

In 1966, the Hawthorne report decried the lack of services on reserve and commented on the inhumane conditions that children on reserve lived in throughout this nation.

Manitoba and Canada entered into an agreement with no consultation or agreement with these First Nations. This, unfortunately, has become the habit of both levels of government: little or no discussion and/or agreement with the very people to be affected.

Honourable senators, we are all well aware of the damages inflicted upon our First Nations people by the residential schools. Much of the focus of this very failed experiment has been on those children who were physically and sexually assaulted.

I would suggest to you, honourable senators, that this tells only part of the story. These children were taken from their families. They were denied access to their culture, to their customs and to their language — their sense of self. We are still seeing the impact of this betrayal of their values in our communities today.

In Manitoba, we went a step further. In my province it was decided that the Indian child welfare problem could be solved by the systemic and mass removal of children from reserves and adopting them to families in Canada, the United States and Europe. From 1971 to 1980, over 3,400 Aboriginal children were taken from their families. In Justice Kimelman’s report of 1982, he exposed what he called the “Sixties Scoop,” and the province agreed to end out-of-province placements and adoption of Aboriginal children.

Meanwhile, the First Nations communities, dismayed by what was happening, began to hire their own on-reserve social workers and to try to work with both Manitoba and Canada to find a way of ensuring the protection of their children.

The federal government, unfortunately, seemed all too willing, despite their fiduciary responsibility to First Nations people, to cede jurisdiction to the province. The federal government cannot

simply ignore their responsibilities to First Nations children. They must be engaged in what is happening to these children. The following questions need answers: Why are so many of these children in care? Why are so many of them being taken from their communities? Why are so many of them being placed with non-Aboriginal families?

I am not suggesting that the issue is a simple one to solve. What I am asking is this: Have we learned nothing from the residential schools experiment? Are we not making the same mistakes once again? Why are we failing to engage our First Nations people about what is in their best interest? Are we still convinced that Whites know better what Aboriginal children need?

• (1710)

I am no expert on our Aboriginal people, but I do believe that children need to be with parents as long as that is possible. When the decision is made that staying with their parents is not in the child’s best interest, then they should be with extended family members and/or members of their community. Only under extreme circumstances should they be removed from their community, and yet all too often in my province this seems to be the norm.

Honourable senators, I implore our Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples to undertake a study on this matter. Let us not go down the same path as residential schools. Let us learn from our mistakes. Let us keep children in their communities whenever possible, close to those who love and care for them, close to their culture and their language.

There are problems in many of our communities. However, I do not believe we will solve these problems by moving children en masse to a new and often hostile environment. We need to do better.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Further debate?

(On motion of Senator Plett, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY ISSUES RELATING TO FOREIGN RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE GENERALLY

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government), for the Honourable Senator Andreychuk, pursuant to notice of June 16, 2011, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, in accordance with Rule 86(1)(f), be authorized to examine such issues as may arise from time to time relating to foreign relations and international trade generally; and

That the committee report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2013.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZIL
AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE
FROM PREVIOUS SESSION

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government), for the Honourable Senator Andreychuk, pursuant to notice of June 16, 2011, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be authorized to examine and report on the political and economic developments in Brazil and the implications for Canadian policy and interests in the region, and other related matters.

That the papers and evidence received and taken on the subject during the Third session of the Fortieth Parliament and any other relevant Parliamentary papers and evidence on the said subject be referred to the Committee; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2012 and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until March 31, 2013.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY PRESENT
STATE OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL
FINANCIAL SYSTEM

Hon. Michael A. Meighen, pursuant to notice of June 16, 2011, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce be authorized to examine and report upon the present state of the domestic and international financial system; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2012, and that the committee retain until March 31, 2013, all powers necessary to publicize its findings.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY ACCESSIBILITY
OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND
REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE
FROM FORTIETH PARLIAMENT

Hon. Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie, pursuant to notice of June 16, 2011, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized to examine and report on the accessibility of post-secondary education in Canada, including but not limited to:

- (a) analysis of the current barriers in post-secondary education, such as geography, family income levels, means of financing for students, debt levels and challenges faced specifically by Aboriginal students;
- (b) evaluation of the current mechanisms for students to fund post-secondary education, such as Canada Student Loans Program, Canada Student Grants Program, Canada Access Grants, funding for Aboriginal students, Canada Learning Bonds, and Registered Education Savings Plans;
- (c) evaluation of the current mechanisms to fund scientific research and development in post-secondary and related institutions and the commercialization of such research;
- (d) examination of the current federal/provincial transfer mechanism for post-secondary education;
- (e) evaluation of the potential establishment of a dedicated transfer for post-secondary education; and
- (f) any other matters related to the study;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject during the Fortieth Parliament be referred to the committee; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2011, and that the committee retain until June 30, 2012, all powers necessary to publicize its findings.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, I have been asked to remind you that, as agreed on June 8, another official photograph of the Senate will be taken tomorrow, Wednesday, June 22, 2011, during the initial portion of the sitting. The photographer will be in the north gallery to take pictures of senators at work.

I have also been asked to bring to the attention of honourable senators that when this session shall suspend, there will be a reception in honour of Honourable Senator Lucie Pépin in the dining quarters of the Speaker, and everyone is cordially invited to attend.

[Translation]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO SUSPEND TODAY'S SITTING
FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADJOURNMENT OR
TO RECEIVE MESSAGES FROM COMMONS—
MOTION WITHDRAWN

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I know that in the other place they are currently voting on a bill which we are awaiting. Consequently, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 58(1)(i), I move:

That the sitting be suspended to reassemble at the call of the Chair, with a fifteen minute bell;

That committees scheduled to meet today have power to meet at and during the suspension, with the application of rule 95(4) being suspended in relation thereto;

That the application of rule 13(1) be suspended today; and

That, when the sitting resumes, it be either for the purpose of adjournment or to receive any messages from the House of Commons.

Hon. Fernand Robichaud: Do committees have permission to meet during the suspension, but senators must return when the bells ring?

Senator Carignan: The committees would be permitted to meet in both cases.

Senator Robichaud: During the suspension and afterwards?

Senator Carignan: Yes.

[English]

Hon. Tommy Banks: I appreciate what Senator Robichaud just asked, but I am not quite certain. When the bells ring, does that interrupt a committee meeting that may have started, and can that committee meeting continue even though the bells are ringing?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: Committees may continue to meet since it is not a vote.

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: The way the motion reads, honourable senators, is that committees scheduled to meet today have power to meet at and during the suspension, with the application of rule 95(4) being suspended in relation thereto.

Honourable senators, this is an interesting debate, but we do not have to take it any further because we have now received the bill.

(Motion withdrawn.)

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE SENIORS AND
STRENGTHENING CANADA'S ECONOMY BILL

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore* informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-3, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011.

(Bill read first time.)

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the second time?

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 57(1)(f), I move that the bill be read the second time at the next sitting of the Senate.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Carignan, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

(The Senate adjourned until Wednesday, June 22, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.)

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